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NO. 14.

OUR MOTHERS-IN-LAW.

[Temple Bar.]

I was young, very young, and walking the hospitals as a medical student, when I first became acquainted with Mrs. Dimply. She was a widow with five daughters, all of them charming, but the third, Rosa Matilda by name, quickly destroyed all my power of appreciating the attractions of her sisters. I charming, but the third, Rosa Mathida by name, quickly destroyed all my power of appreciating the attractions of her sisters. I was introduced to the family by a mutual friend, and from that time became a constant, too constant, visitor at their house. Once a fortnight merged into once a week, and once a week insensibly increased to twice, or even oftener. It was a pleasant house to visit, and we had remarkably jolly evenings. I was rather a favorite with the whole family, but the kindness of Mrs. Dimply was simply overwhelming. If I chanced to be a little late she would shake her ringlets at me, and remark in her deep voice (she had a rich mellow voice, which always reminded me somehow of fruity port.) "Late again, doctor, you naughty, naughty man. I suppose they couldn't spare you at the hospital. What a thing it is to be so clever." Of course I wasn't a doctor, and the hospital could have done perfectly well without me, but the whole thing was very soothing. Then again if I sang a song, Mrs D. (who did so pity anybody who hadn't a soul for music) would sit enraptured, frowning flercely and holding up a warning finger if any one ventured to interrupt. And when I had finished—"Dear me, Dr. Smithers, what a sweet song, and you sing it so charmingly! You must really give it us over again. It's your own fault for singing it so nicely." And if the subject gave her the ghost of a chance she would make a little gulp in her throat, as if swallowing down a spasm of uncontrollable emotion, and wipe her eyes with the corner of her lace pocket handkerchief. After supper, too, the way that she mixed my toddy was quite touching. She never put in less than four lumps of sugar if like it sweet, and always took a sip herself with the spoon to make sure it was all right. On one or two occasions, when the water hadn't quite boiled, her self-reproach was really painful. But these were haleyon days. I quite boiled, her self-reproach was really painful. But these were haloyon days. I must proceed to the more prosaic portion of

Time went on. I succeeded in passing my final examination, and became entitled to write myself M. R. C. S. Of course I rushed off at once to the Dimplys with the joyful in-telligence. Mrs. D. shed tears and blessed me, and incited me to kiss the girls all round me, and incited me to kiss the girls all round in bonor of the occasion. I need hardly say I availed myself of the suggestion, Rosa Matilda getting (if I may be allowed the expression) a Benjamin's portion. I think that evening brought matters to a crisis; at any rate, I found myself, about a week after, asking a private interview with Mrs. D., and pleading for the hand of Rosa and pleading for the hand of Rosa Matilda. She was so very fond of the dear girl that I was terribly afraid (I was very young, you vill remember,) that I shouldn't be able to induce her to part with her; but, to my surprise and relief, she gave her consent without the slightest press-lng, and taking me into the drawing-room, introduced me to the girls (with much departed D. (unless his portrait was a libel) had been a podgy little man with a snub nose, and much marked with the small-pox; but I felt that the observantion was intended as a compliment, and accepted it accordingly.

Fortunately for myself, I was not entirely dependent on my profession, and after a brief engagement we were married. I pass over the wedding, which was pretty much like any other wedding. I think perhaps I got rather more than the average quantity of rice down my back, and we drove away with two white satin slippers (odd ones un-fortunately) on the roof of the carriage. treating me to love and cherish her dear, dear girl, and was scarcely pacified even by my fervent assurance that I had every intention of doing so.

We spent three delicious weeks in the Isle of Wight and then took possession of our new home, a pretty little villa in St. John's Wood. We had been installed about ten days when an affectionate letter arrived from mamma-in-law, amouncing her inten-tion of coming to stay a week with us and see how we were getting on. It struck me that it was a little early for such a visit, but it would have been ungracious to make any objection. She arrived the same evening. Rosie and I were sitting together (she was sitting on my knee, in point of fact,) when we heard mamma-in-law's cab stop at the door, and we ran out into the hall to welcome her. There she was, smilling and shaking her ringlets as playfully as ever, while the cabman was bringing in three trunks, two bandpurpose the dear creature handed me 18 pence. Cabby demanded half a crown, and after a violent altercation, which made me very hot and uncomfortable, and brought out two cooks and a housemaid from adjoining houses to see the fun, I compromised with him for 2 shillings, which was his proper fare, paying the extra sixpence out of my own pocket. I got inside just in time see the servants knock out two of balusters with the biggest of the boxes. I implored them to be more careful, and they accordingly avoided the balusters, and thence-forth confined themselves to knocking holes in the wall and tearing jagged pieces out of the paper as far as the second floor. With this exception, nothing particuher appearance at breakfest (rather late) in a fiannel dressing-gown and curl papers. Now, if there is anything I hate more than a fiannel dressing-gown, it is ourl papers; and if there is anything I hate more than curl papers, it is a fiannel dressing-gown. "I make myself quite at home, my dears, "I make myself quite at home, my dears, you see," was her first greeting, shaking her curl papers as she was wont to do her curls, though by no means with the same effect. swallowed my annoyance, and ventured to hope that she had slept well. No, if she must tell the truth, (which she needn't have done on my account, I'm sure,) not very

bacon always disagrees with me; but if you happen to have such a thing as a bloater in the house now—" Of course we didn't happen to have such a thing in the house, but I promised that our establishment should be kept permanently provided with bloaters for the future, and the dear woman kindly accepted three pork sausages as a temporary substitute. (I may mention incidentally that I ordered a quarter of of a hundred of real Yarmouth for her the very same day. She ate two of them, and then discovered that bloaters made her so dreadfully thirsty. No other member of our household cared for them, and the remaining twenty-three, after giving a sort of sea air to the establishment for a fortnight, were ultimately given to the milkman.)

The first thing after breakfast the dear creature said sweetly, "Now, Rosie, my love, give me your keys and I'll set your store cupboard to rights for you. I don't intend you to be bothered with any house-keeping during the week or two I am with you." Mark the delicate crescendo—she only said one week at first, but now it had got to a week or two. My poor little wife looked rather crestfallen, for she enjoyed the discharge of her new duties as mistress, but the habit of obedience was still strong, and she was about to hand over the insignia of authority when I came to the resoue. "No, no, mamma! that won't do. Rosie makes a capital little house-keeper, and I want her to have as much practice as possible. She must bustle about more than Rosie makes a capital little house-keeper, and I want her to have as much practice as possible. She must bustle about more than ever during the short time that you are here (I thought that was rather neatly put) so that she may have the full benefits of your experience. "Rosie gave me a grateful look, and pocketed the keys again. Ms. D. tried to look as if she didn't mind in the least, and wagged her curl papers more payfully than

ever.

I started on my daily round, to look in at the hospital and call on my few patients, and did not return until dinner time My little wife came out to meet me in the hall with by no means her usual smiling face; indeed it struck me that her eyes were a little red. I did not male any remark until we were left alone. Then I inquired the cause. The poor little woman tried hard to maintain her composure, but it was not until after she had had a good cry on my shoulder that lextracted from her, by degrees, that mamma had been "going on" at her so, telling her that she did pretty nearly everything wrong, that she felt quite discouraged and miserable. I comforted her as best I could. The dinner, for the first time since our marriage, was a failforted her as best I could. The dinner, for the first time since our marriage, was a fall-ure, and Mrs. D. did not improve matters by remarking, in her sweetest manner, that she feared all along it would be so. If dear Rosie had only taken her advies, and hadn't done this, and 'ad done that, and had been a leetle more particular about something else, all would have been as it should be. Of course I took my wife's part, and testified with some warmth that up to that day the cookery had always been perfection. Mrs. D. drew herself up, pad for 'he remainder of the meal retired within herself, from which dignified but constrained position it took dignified but constrained position it took three glasses of my best Madeira to extricate

room and going to sleep immediately after dinner. It struck me that if she objected to the sound of the piano she might as well betake herself to some other room, and I tried a few chords, to see if she would take the hint and retire, but she merely opened her eyes with the air of a saint in the act of martyrdom, and faintly remarked that she feared one of her dreadful headaches was wife, which was another of our enjoyments, was equally tabooed. In desperation I hinted to Rosie that we had better return to the dining-room, but the sleeping beauty on the sofa languidly opened her eyes and said: "Pray keep me company, my dears; I assure you you don't disturb me in the least," which, if snoring is a sign of undisturbed repose, we certainly didn't. She continued to doze for the remainder of the evening, but if by any chance I pressed my evening, but if by any chance I pressed my wife's hand, or ventured on any other conju-gal endearment, one eye of the sleeper would gai endearment, one eye of the sleeper would slowly open and gaze at me with an expression—I really hardly know what expression—but the effect was awful. Nobody who hasn't tried it can imagine the nameless horror, the uncanny and witch-like fascination that is contained in the steadast gaze of a findle eye particularly if that was belown to

The evening came to an end at last, and was followed by several others, as like it as possible. My wife and I, who had been accustomed to make sweet music together, or to sit, side by side, and hand in hand, on the sofa, enjoying the last new magazine, now sat in grim propriety on opposite sides of the fireplace, hardly venturing to talk above our breath for fear of disturbing mamma-in-law, droning burr, occasionally interrupted by rapid snorts, like corks drawn in quick succession. As we could no longer enjoy our evenings at home, I determined to make an effort to enjoy them abroad, and accordingly announced to Rosie at dinner time one day that I intended to treat her to the ballad concert at St. James' hall that evening. Mamma-in-law, who no longer cared for music when it could be had gratis on the promises, was immediately seized with an intense desire to hear that dear Signor somebody or other, and accordingly I had to take her, too. I must own that she offered to pay for herself, but on my saying politely that I could not possibly allow her to do so, she yielded without a murmur. An evening at ence, say protoplasm or cataplasm, or even go down in the diving bell with us, rather than let us go alone. In the daytime mat-ters were little better. I, myself, was gen-erally out all the morning, but poor Rosie was so lectured, and instructed, and advised, all in the sweetest (and most aggravating manner, that she began to look quite hag mainer, that she began to look quite hag-gard and worried. Our cook, a really valu-able person, with whom we had been much pleased, had given warning four days after Mrs. Dimply's arrival, stating unreservedly that two "missues" in one house were one too many for her. And I cordially sympa-thized with her. well. She never did like those new-fangled spring mattresses. Nothing like her old-fashioned feather bed at home, for her.

fangled spring mattresses. Nothing like her old-fashioned feather bed at home, for her. (The retort was obvious, but, of course, I didn't make it.) And then again, she couldn't help thinking that the sheets were "her room," and to make little alterations (The retort was obvious, but, or course, a didn't make it.) And then again, she parture. Indeed, she had begun to take of their country that the sheets were in the furniture, which betokened a very lengthened visit. I now began to understand why she had taken such a warm indraught from the left-hand window. I promised that all these little matters should be seen to, and asked if I might help her to an egg or a rasher of bacon. "Thank you, no. I remember her telling Rosie that a tastefully furnished spare room gave such a "style" (Continued on fourth page.)

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